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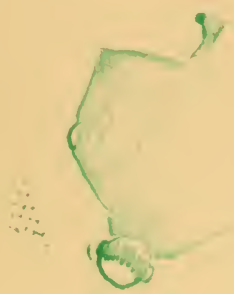
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Danse macabre /




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DANSE MACABRE



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HANS HOLBEIN
THE YOUNGER

Dance of death.

DANSE
MACABRE



NEW YORK :
MURDOCH HOWELL
& BARROWS

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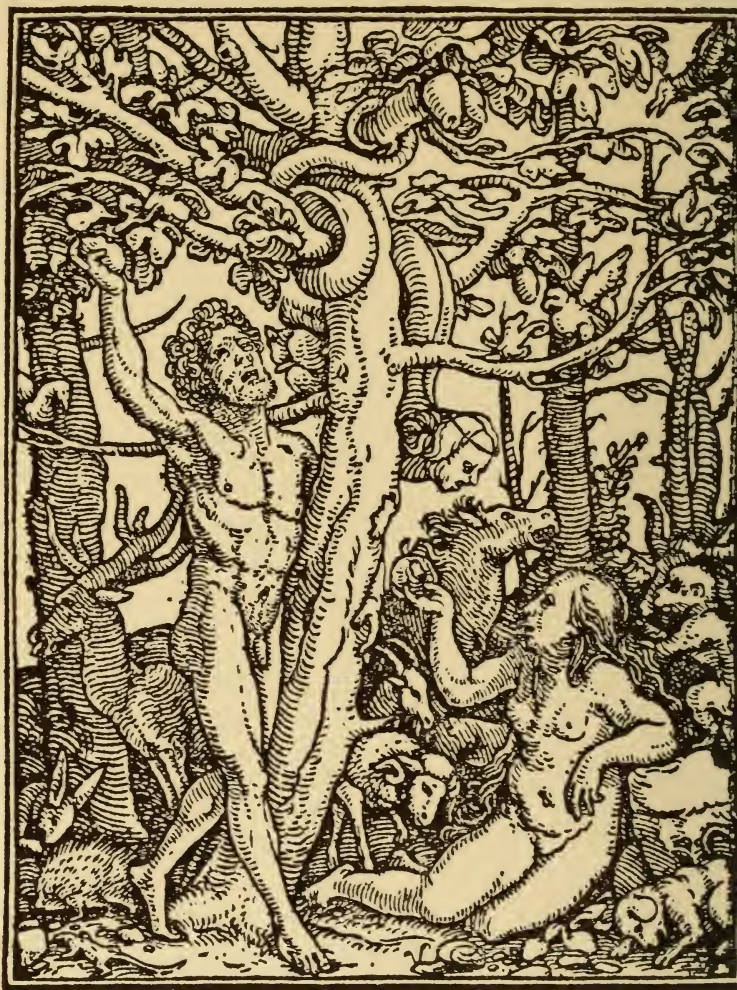
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
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The Creation.



491537

Adam and Eve in Paradise.



Expulsion of Adam and Eve.



Adam tills the soil.



The Pope.



The Cardinal.



The Bishop.



The Canon.



The Abbot.



The Pastor.



The Preacher.



The Friar.



The Doctor.



The Astrologer.



The Emperor.



The King.



The Duke.



The Judge.



The Advocate.



The Count.



The Knight.



The Nobleman.



The Counsellor.



The Rich Man.



The Merchant.



The Pedlar.



The Sailor.



The Ploughman.



The Old Man.



The Empress.



The Queen.



The Duchess.



The Countess.



The Noble Lady.



The Abbess.



The Nun.



The Old Woman.



The Young Child.



Bones of All Men.



235164

The Last Judgment.



The Escutcheon of Death.





HANS HOLBEIN THE YOUNGER WAS

born at Augsburg in 1497. His father, Hans Holbein the Elder, his uncle and brother all were painters. In 1514 Hans the Younger and his brother Ambrosius ("Prosy") left Augsburg, and after wanderings reached Basel, where by 1515 Hans was working for the great publishers (Froben, Amerbach, and others) who made the city's name glorious in the Renaissance.

In 1519 he became a member of the painters' guild, and in 1520 he married the widow Elsbeth Schmidt, by whom he had four children; but the marriage was not happy.

He probably turned Protestant. No good Catholic would have struck so savagely at the Mother Church as did the artist of the *Totentanz*.

In 1524 he took a trip, very likely calling at Lyons, where the *Pictures of Death* were first published.

Between 1524 and 1526 at Basel Holbein drew the *Pictures of Death*. The true splendor of these pictures we can see without being told; the political insinuations which helped the book to its first success to-day need explanation. The Peasants' War had just ceased to rage; the warlike pictures are echoes of that savage struggle. The *Emperor* from whose head Death twists the crown is Maximilian I, Dürer's patron. It takes no historian to recognize François I in *The King*. The supporters of *The Escutcheon of Death* are said to be Holbein and his wife. Popes, priests and nuns—their eyes and hearts fixed on anything but the Faith—are depicted with a venom which made the book impossible for the great publishers of Basel. Not until twelve years later did the book appear.

Holbein's designs were cut on wood by Hans Lützelburger, called Franck, whose initials appear on the bedstead of *The Duchess*. Of Lützelburger we know only that he was one of the most superb xylographers of all time, and that he died in 1526, after crowning his career with the *Pictures of Death*.

After he had finished this book for the common people, Holbein, with an introduction from Erasmus to Sir Thomas More, went to England, there to show himself the master painter of the great. When we think of Erasmus, of Henry VIII, of the lords and ladies at court, we imagine them as Holbein painted them. Whether his paintings will outlive his pictures of mortality is a question probably to be answered only with the end of our civilization. He himself fell a victim to the Plague at London in 1543, with work yet before him.



THE THEME OF THE *DANSE MACABRE* of course is much older than Holbein: in pictures it goes back at least to the fourteenth century, when the Black Death offered rich stimulation to artists. The

Dance was a favorite preoccupation especially among the Dominicans, who used it in much the same spirit in which John Cotton wrote the *Pious Lives and Happy Deaths* for puritans. There were several versions of the *Totentanz* on buildings around Basel, and in fact the figure on our cover is reputed to be copied from two of these.

Hans Holbein's *Pictures of Death* were first published at Lyons by the brothers Trechsel in 1538. Even so late, care was taken to cover Holbein by implying that the book was all the

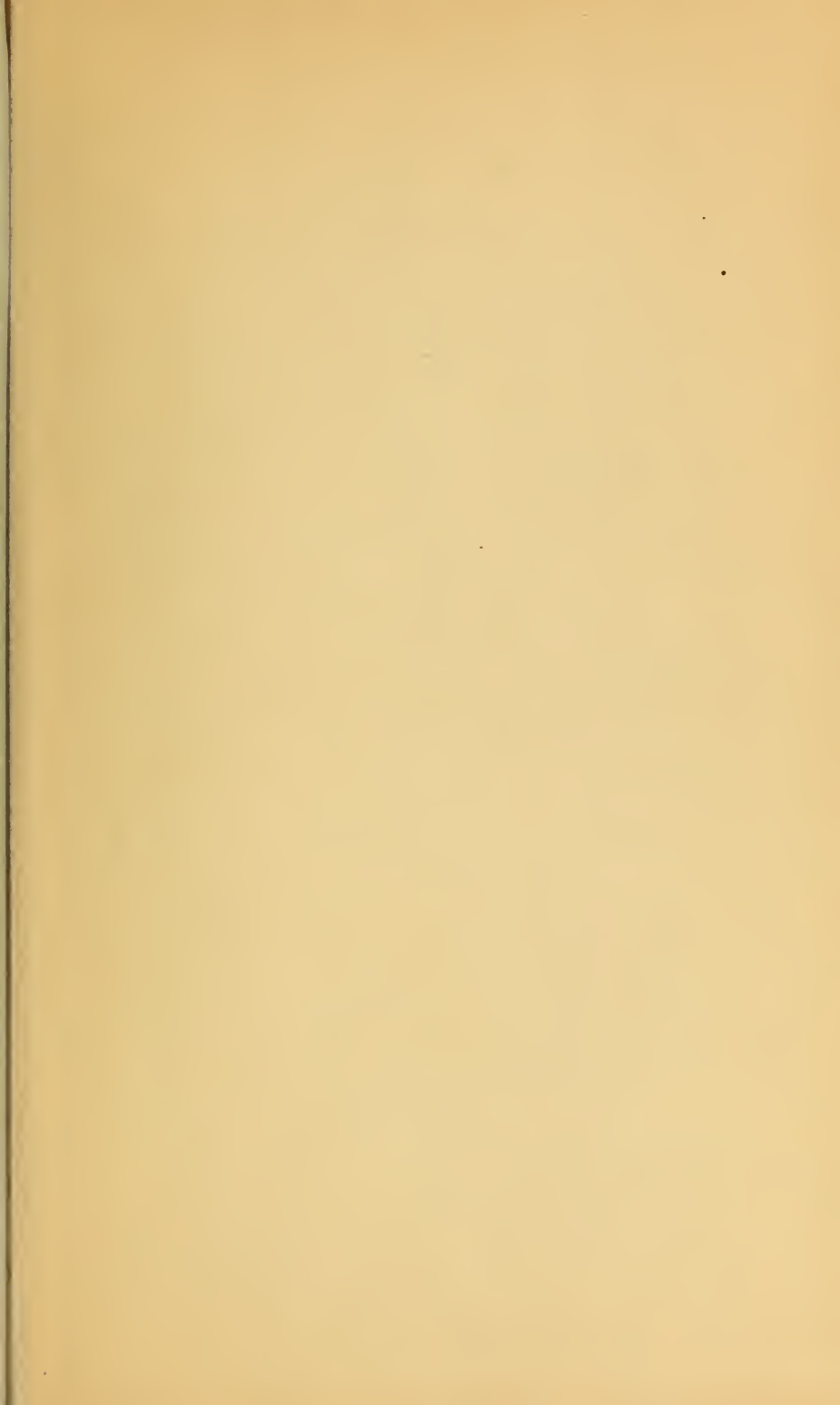
work of the dead Lützelburger. Furthermore a cloak of decency was provided by the dedication to a respectable abbess, who trustingly accepted the dedication before seeing the book. This edition had Latin quotations from the Bible above the pictures, and French quatrains by Gilles Corozet below.

There were engravers' proofs of all the pictures except the *Astronomer*, with German captions, evidently pulled before the book's publication. Our edition is taken from reproductions by the German Government Printing Office of these proofs. We have enlarged the pictures to twice the original size—a revealing process which merely emphasizes the xylographer Lützelburger's skill.

Later editions—of which there were scores, honest and pirated, from Germany to John Bewick—had a few extra pictures, but we believe we have presented the heart of the masterpiece in these, the original forty-one.

The Publishers.









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